Bioethics

Course Objectives:

Course Description:
The course will explore and analyze moral issues raised by the recent development of biological and medical sciences, including those related to reproductive technologies, human genetics, health-care policies, and human/animal experimentation. The course will help the students become aware of the moral implications of modern biological and medical sciences, and provide them with the theoretical framework for moral reflection and judgment. Through discussions of particular cases, the students will learn the complexities that often surround moral choices in biological and medical sciences, and will develop their own rational and coherent positions in reference to the discussed issues.

Course Content:
This course will introduce students to a significant body of philosophical literature from the field of bioethics, will introduce students to the questions, methods and approaches of bioethics, and will emphasize balanced argument, and critical and reflective thought.

Student Outcomes:
Students will acquire knowledge of a significant body of philosophical literature from the field of bioethics, will gain practice in exploring the questions, methods and approaches of bioethics, and will acquire skill in emphasize balanced argument, and critical and reflective thought.

Required Texts:

Additional reading materials are available in the website of the course: (http://public.clunet.edu/~chenxi/phil345.pdf)

Grades and Assignments:
Students will be graded on the basis of one mid-term test (20%), one final exam (30%), research project (25%), in-class assignments (15%), and class participation (10%).

Research Project: Students are asked to participate in a research project that simulates processes of IRB review on experimentation of human subjects.

In-Class Assignments: In many classes, students will be asked to write a short response to a question based on one of the topics for that day. Each of these in-class assignments earns one point of course credit (1%).
Course Outline:

Part 1: Theoretical Framework
1.1 Introduction
   Readings:

2.1 The Principles of Beneficence
   In-Class Assignment (1): Who was the murderer?
   Readings:

2.2 The Principle of Autonomy
   In-Class Assignment (2): A French lady and her lawyer.
   Readings:
   Rachels, “Kantian Theory: The idea of Human Dignity.”
   American Medical Association, “Principles of Medical Ethics.” Contemporary Bioethics, pp. 48-49.

3.1 Cultures and Ethical Principles
   Readings:
   Bloche and Marks, “When Doctors Go to War.” Contemporary Bioethics, pp. 107-110.

3.2 Moral Arguments
   Readings:
   Van Camp, Olen, and Barry, “Good Reasoning.”

Part 2: The Beginning and the End of Life
4.1 The Moral Status of the Fetus
   In-Class Assignment (3): Octuplets and selective abortion.
   Readings:

4.2 Embryonic Stem-Cell Research
   Readings:
Geron Ethics Advisory Board, “Research with Human Embryonic Stem Cells: Ethical Considerations.” *Contemporary Bioethics*, pp. 553-556.

5.1 Assisted Reproduction

*In-Class Assignment (4):* Embryos in court: The Davis and Nahmani case.

**Readings:**

5.2 Euthanasia

**Readings:**

Part 3: Genetics

6.1 Human Cloning

*In-Class Assignment (5):* The heart-transplant experience.

**Readings:**

6.2 Genetic Information

*In-Class Assignment (6):* How should we use genetic information?

**Readings:**

7.1 Gene Therapy

*In-Class Assignment (7):* Human Growth Hormone Therapy.

**Readings:**

7.2 Eugenics
In-Class Assignment (8): Do we have the right to change our biological clock?
Readings:

8.1 Take-Home Test (3/8)

Part 4: Biological and Medical Research

8.2 Deception in Medical Research

In-Class Assignment (9): The Milgram experiment.
Readings:
Newell, “The Case of Deception in Medical Experimentation.”

[Spring Break]

10.1 Informed Consent

Readings:

10.2 Ethical Issues in Clinical Trials

In-Class Assignment (10): Dr. Smith’s randomized clinical trial.
Readings:
Orentlicher, “Making Research a Requirement of Treatment: Why We Should Sometimes Let Doctors Pressure Patients to Participate in Research.” *Contemporary Bioethics*, pp. 519-522.

11.1 Animal Experiments in Medical Research

Readings:
Singer, “Animal Liberation.”
11.2 Animal's Moral Rights

In-Class Assignment (11): The New Zealand “ape rights” legislation.

Readings:
Regan, “The Case for Animal Rights.”
Contemporary Bioethics, pp. 556-564.

12.1 Biological Research and the Environment

In-Class Assignment (12): Bt. Corns and butterflies.
Jameton and Pierce, “Sustainable Health Care and Emerging Ethical Responsibilities.”
Contemporary Bioethics, pp. 697-701.
Bednarz, “Medicine after Oil: It Could Be Distributed a Lot More Democratically.”
Contemporary Bioethics, pp. 702-703.

Part 5: Allocating Healthcare Resources

12.2 The Principle of Justice

In-Class Assignment (13): Who deserve rewards?

Readings:
Contemporary Bioethics, pp. 371-378.
Hospers, “What Libertarianism is.”

13.1 Resource Allocation

In-Class Assignment (14): Universal healthcare?

Readings:
Contemporary Bioethics, pp. 404-411.

13.2 Organ Donations

In-Class Assignment (15): Should alcoholics receive liver transplants?

Readings:
Verheijde, Rady, and McGregor, “Recovery of Transplantable Organs After Cardiac or Circulatory Death: Transforming the Paradigm for the Ethics of Organ Donation.”
Contemporary Bioethics, pp. 455-460.
Björkman, “Why We Are Not Allowed to Sell That Which We Are Encouraged to Donate.” Contemporary Bioethics, pp. 460-464.
Part 5: Practice of Bioethics

14.1 Ethics Committees
Readings:
Moreno, “Ethics committees and ethics consultants.”

14.2 Preparation for the Research Project
15.1 Ethics Committees at Work, I (4/26)
Assignment:
“Researchers” present their research proposals to “ethics committees” and answer questions from “committees”.

15.2 Ethics Committees at Work, II (4/28)
Assignment:
“Ethics committees” deliver their comments and decisions.

16.1 Ethics Committees at Work, III (5/3)
Assignment:
“Researchers” present their revised proposals to respond to the concerns of “ethics committees”.

16.2 Wrapping up

This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructors.
California Lutheran University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with various documented disabilities (physical, learning or psychological). If you are a student requesting accommodations for this course, please contact your professor at the beginning of the semester and register with the Coordinator for Students with Disabilities (Pearson Library, Center for Academic and Accessibility Resources, Ext. 3260) for the facilitation and verification of need. Faculty will work closely together with you and your coordinator to provide necessary accommodations.